

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO AMEMBASSY ROME

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 1867

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, IT, VT, MX

SUBJECT: PLANNED VISIT TO ROME OF FATHER PETER KURGUZ

1. FATHER PETER NICHOLAS KURGUZ, A DOMINICAN FRIAR WHO IS A U.S. CITIZEN, PLANS TO CALL ON YOUR EMBASSY WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. AS AMBASSADOR JOVA NOT SURE WHO FOLLOWS VATICAN AFFAIRS HE SUGGESTED THAT KURGUZ SEE POLITICAL COUNSELOR OR PETER SARROS. ANY ASSISTANCE WHICH CAN BE RENDERED FATHER KURGUZ WILL BE APPRECIATED. FOLLOWING BACKGROUND ON KURGUZ PROVIDED FOR EMBASSY'S INFORMATION.

2. KURGUZ CAME TO MEXICO IN 1967 AND IS CURRENTLY DIRECTOR OF "PROYECTOS INTELECTUALES Y SOCIALES, A.C." IN MEXICO CITY. HIS FATHER WAS AN EMIGRANT FROM THE SOVIET UNION, HIS MOTHER FROM YUGOSLAVIA. HE HOLDS A DOCTORAL DEGREE IN SOVIET STUDIES. FATHER KURGUZ HAS BEEN A LONG-TIME EXPONENT OF THE POSITION THAT THE VATICAN TAKE A MUCH HARDER LINE AGAINST COMMUNISM. KURGUZ RECENTLY TOLD EMBASSY OFFICERS THAT HE WAS DISTURBED ABOUT A TRIP HE HAD MADE TO THE VATICAN DURING THE END OF 1975 WHEN HE HAD FOUND VATICAN OFFICIALS CAUGHT UP IN THE RHETORIC OF DETENTE. HE WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE LIBERAL VIEWS OF CARDINAL CASSAROLLI AND WHAT KURGUZ DESCRIBED TO BE THE GENERAL SOFTNESS

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OF THE VATICAN ON THE ISSUE OF COMMUNISM. KURGUZ SAID

THAT HIS CONCERNS RE ITALY GOING COMMUNIST WERE SHARED
BY PAPAL NUNCIO TO ITALY ARCHBISOP ROMOLO CARBONI.

3. DUE TO THESE FEARS, KURGUZ HAS BEEN PRESSING HIS
FRIENDS IN THE VATICAN TO TAKE A STRONGER STAND
IN PRESENTING ANTI-COMMUNIST VIEWS TO POPE PAUL. IN
RESPONSE TO KURGUZ' URGINGS, KURGUZ HAS BEEN TASKED
(VIA CARBONI) WITH PREPARING PAPER ON A "POSSIBLE
SOLUTION TO COMMUNISM IN ITALY." CONSEQUENTLY, KURGUZ
HAS JUST SPENT A WEEK AT THE HOOVER INSTITUTION ON WAR,
REVOLUTION AND PEACE AT STANDFORD USING THE RESURCES OF
THIS INSTITUTION AND CONSULTING WITH STEFAN T. POSSONY,
RENOWNED SCHOLAR ON INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM. THE RESULT
IS A STRONG PAPER ON THE INCOMPATIBILITY OF COMMUNISM AND
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH WHICH KURGUZ WILL PRESENT PERSONALLY TO
VATICAN OFFICIALS SOMETIME DURING THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 16.
KURGUZ HOPES THAT HIS PAPER WILL BE THE BASIS FOR PAPAL
ENCYCLICALS CONDEMNING COMMUNISM WHICH IN TIME WILL
TURN ITALY IN A NEW DIRECTION.

4. FATHER KURGUZ IS EXTREMELY ACTIVE AND HAS BEEN
FAVORABLY KNOWN TO EMBASSY OFFICERS FOR SOME TIME.
ALTHOUGH AT TIMES HE BORDERS ON HAVING A MESSIANIC
ZEAL, HE IS UNDOUBTEDLY SINCERE IN HIS CONCERNS AND
CONVICTION THAT SOMETHING NEEDS TO BE DONE. HE IS ALSO
INTELLIGENT AND ARTICULATE AND APPEARS TO HAVE
THE EAR OF INFLUENTIAL PERSONS IN THE VATICAN.
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